

Southern California Water Committee, Inc.

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March 31, 2000

Mr. Mike Madigan, Chair

Ms. Sunne McPeak, Vice Chair

Bay Delta Advisory Council

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155

Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Comments on Draft Motion on Preferred Alternative

Dear Mike and Sunne:

I have consulted with the Board of Trustees of the Southern California Water Committee and it is with their support that I oppose taking any action on the preferred alternative at this time.

The ongoing discussions between the Secretary of Interior and the Governor's office have yet to result in any definitive recommendations. It is my understanding that these negotiations will result in specific actions to be taken in the Stage I implementation program and a Preferred Alternative and the Record of Decision will have to support the implementation agreement. Therefore, it is premature to take any action until the details of the negotiated program is known.

The Southern California Water Committee believes that the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is at a crossroads. And, any action plan that will be effective for our interests needs to include elements that provide regulatory reform and assurances; investment in infrastructure, particularly surface storage; support of regional solutions and programs that deliver quality water; recognition of the need to coordinate ecosystem restoration; and the optimization of through Delta conveyance Stage I actions items including the continued evaluation of the need for an isolated facility component of the dual transfer Delta facility.

The Southern California Water Committee is committed to a framework agreement that would provide much needed flexibility in the Bay Delta system including site specific surface storage and ground water storage components-with identification of yields, costs and benefits, and improvements in the South Delta including a diversion at Hood.

In addition, the SCWC supports water management strategies that would assign water saved to local agencies. Water use efficiency must be linked to other program elements, such as storage.

A cooperative effort of business, government, water agencies, agriculture, and public interests.

Mr. Mike Madigan, Chair
Ms. Sunne McPeak, Vice Chair
Bay Delta Advisory Council
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Currently, the CALFED program does not champion a balanced package. To endorse the CALFED Bay-Delta Preferred Alternative, the Water Committee must be assured that Delta outflows that support fish populations balance with necessary diversions for water needs within and outside of the Delta. Absolute regulatory assurances in the form of enforceable contracts is critical to our endorsement.

To date, over one billion dollars have been dedicated to ecosystem restoration programs and these need to be linked to water quality and supply improvements. Not enough emphasis has been placed on the ecosystem improvements that are currently underway, nor on the one million acre feet that was committed to the ecosystem by the Accord agreement. Water users must have a Preferred Alternative that ensures a foundation level of protection.

I look forward to participating at the April 13th BDAC meeting and discussing with my colleagues the above comments. It is important that stakeholders in Southern California, the counties, cities, businesses, and agricultural entities that the Southern California Water Committee represents, can identify value from CALFED Program in the final Record of Decision.

Very truly yours,



Stephen A. Zapotoczny
Chairman

cc: Governor Gray Davis, State of California
Secretary Bruce Babbitt, Department of Interior

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